

DRAFT

Utah 2030  
Final Phase:  
Planning Brief Part III  
December 7, 2006

Utah Department of Environmental Quality  
Dan Brentel, Director, HRM  
536-4412

## Part 1: Internal Scan

1. Identify the impact of the increase in Utah's aging population on your agency. How will the changing demographic affect your agency's overarching policy issues, direction, program considerations, changing constituency needs, and management concerns?
  - a. Process:

Present the Utah 2030 charge to the Department's Quality Council (executive staff) consisting of the Director, Deputy Director, Division and Office Directors. The Director of HRM and the Department's Planning Coordinator will draft the narrative and present for endorsement by the Quality Council.
  - b. Time frame:

Initial presentation was made months ago to the Quality Council by the Division of Aging representative. The impact of Utah's aging population was considered at that time and has been considered again with the presentation and consideration of Utah 2030.
  - c. Who will be involved:

Agency management including Department Director, Deputy Director and Division and Office Directors
2. If your agency has begun to address the impact of the aging population, describe what you are doing to address or respond to these anticipated changes, including identified priorities, overarching policies, programs, etc.
  - a. Process:

The Department's Quality Council responded to the earlier presentation of the aging study (see attachment – Department of Environmental Quality). The response provided at that time continues to appropriately reflect the effect of environmental conditions on the senior citizens who, along with the very young, are more susceptible to environmental pollution. Departmental efforts aimed at achieving and maintaining environmental health standards are ongoing and will see little impact from the aging of the population.

Mature workers are a growing component of the labor force in the Department of Environmental Quality as in other agencies and sectors of the economy. Department policies do not discriminate against age or the mature worker. The Department is engaged in succession planning in preparing for the retiring elderly. The attached "DEQ Leadership and

Employee Development Training Program Summary” is evidence of this process.

- b. Time frame:

Ongoing.

- c. Who will be involved:

Department management and the DEQ Leadership Steering Committee oversee the training program which is offered to all Department personnel.

## **Part II: Agency Priorities**

1. The work of the Department of Environmental Quality proceeded in accordance with the Department’s Work Plan.
2. Overarching Issues
  - a. Senior citizens are more susceptible to health problems associated with environmental pollution.
  - b. The loss of qualified staff and their expertise due to retirement has a dramatic impact on environmental programs and infrastructure needs
  - c. If senior staff decide to continue employment rather than retiring, the Department continues to benefit from their expertise and mentoring. If senior citizens with environmental expertise can be recruited even for volunteer work, they also can be expected to make a valuable contribution to achieving the Department’s mission.
  - d. As population grows, so will the need to increase environmental infrastructure to keep pace with increasing regulations, new technologies and limited funding.
3. These issues were selected through individual consideration, combining like issues of environmental health, loss of staff due to aging and retirement, and infrastructure concerns also due to aging.

### **Part III: Response Plan**

1. Senior citizens are more susceptible to health problems associated with environmental pollution. (Overarching Issue 2.a.)

#### Actions:

The department is in a continuous mode of operation in reviewing environmental data which could show an adverse effect on the senior population. Monitoring for air, land and water will guide future policy development in areas that have environmental impacts on the population. The department will work with local, state and federal officials in identifying those issues that affect the vulnerable populations. The department will use all available resources to notify and educate the aging populations as to current conditions and how best to protect themselves during times that may affect individual health. The Department will make information easily available to all organizations, individuals and caregivers that provide services to the elderly through utilization of the media, educational institutions, and outreach programs targeted to senior citizens.

#### Results:

This work is ongoing and will change as conditions dictate. The department continues to monitor and advise as necessary populations that will, and can, be effected by adverse environmental conditions. Ongoing monitoring of land, air, and water and utilization of the media as an informational tool has been, and will be, a necessary tool to disseminate information resulting in a more educated population and increased awareness. Federal rules and regulations will set the stage for needed protection of the environment which will be implemented by the state. Sound environmental practices have increased the

efficiency of the departments. The Department of Environmental Quality, state and local officials, federal agencies, academia, individual citizens, and the entire state population, work towards awareness and improving all aspects of the environment.

2. The loss of qualified staff and their expertise due to retirement has a dramatic impact on environmental programs and infrastructure needs. (Overarching Issue 2.b.)

Actions:

The department has instituted an employee development training program which has been developed to enhance skills that are relevant to the competencies that will enhance the careers of employees in DEQ and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency. The department has programs that train and certify local health and water system operators to accomplish their respective jobs. Furthermore, professional staff is trained on the most recent procedures in the areas of land, air and water. The DEQ will work closely with DHRM and other applicable state agencies to upgrade procedures in respect to recruitment and the ability to attract and retain the most qualified applicants available. The Department has developed programs such as flex schedules, telecommuting, and reduced hours in an effort to retain qualified senior employees. The state has developed a volunteer program that can be utilized to take advantage of the expertise of retired employees in meeting educational needs, mentoring, and serving on boards and committees. The Department of Environmental Quality will partner with DHRM, state, and local entities to identify all options available to utilize the expertise of our senior population.

Results:

There will be an educated work force in the most up-to-date environmental processes and a trained work force in local environmental health districts', with competent health scientists and operators throughout the state. A work force in DEQ that is knowledgeable and promotable within the system through succession planning and training which will be ongoing and updated yearly. Every two years a core of succession participants have been trained and capable of leading a program within the department. The state must be competitive to attract qualified applicants to ensure that we meet the goals to protect the environment. The Department will work with the Department of Human Resource Management to identify and enhance existing benefit packages and other incentives to retain qualified senior employees and utilize their expertise to enhance the existing workforce while providing the needed expertise to protect the environment.

3. If senior staff decide to continue employment rather than retiring, the Department continues to benefit from their expertise and mentoring. If senior citizens with environmental expertise can be recruited even for volunteer work, they also can be expected to make a valuable contribution to achieving the Department's mission.

(Overarching Issue 2.c.)

Actions:

An increase in senior citizens with environmental training also provides opportunities to utilize this expertise. The Department of Environmental Quality will partner with DHRM, state, and local entities to identify all options available to utilize the expertise of our senior population.

Results:

As stated previously, the Department will work with the Department of Human Resource Management to identify and enhance existing benefit packages and other incentives to retain qualified senior employees and to recruit senior citizens to utilize their expertise to enhance the existing workforce. This work will be ongoing.

4. As population grows, so will the need to increase environmental infrastructure to keep pace with increasing regulations, new technologies and limited funding.

(Overarching Issue 2.d.)

Actions:

The department will continue to educate local, state and federal officials on the current and projected state of the environment. Technology that can be implemented with existing systems to enhance the quality of services will be implemented as funding can be secured. An ongoing effort is needed to educate the local, state and federal offices of the importance in securing funding to ensure adequate resources are available to protect the environment and public health of its citizens. A continuous educational effort has been implemented and utilized to promote the DEQ mission. DEQ will continue to explore all possible venues of funding, including but not limited to, EPA/Federal grants, legislative funding, and environmental fees to continue its efforts to provide the citizens a better environment. Funding will also be sought to maintain a qualified and educated workforce that is adaptable to change and addresses the needs of an aging population through research, education, partnerships, and strategic planning.

Results:

Increase funding to improve infrastructure associated with the environment. Funding provided to secure loans for local water districts to improve drinking water systems, wastewater systems, increase air monitoring equipment to monitor air quality, overall increase in the proper use of waste disposal and increase monitoring of lakes and streams for quality of life. This will be accomplished by an educated citizenship that understands the environment, its obligations and funding necessary to provide a positive state of the environment. The Department will utilize a proactive approach to retain qualified staff, maintain expertise needed to accomplish environmental programs and meet conditions of increasing demands with limited resources.